BEACON HR/PAYROLL IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT
MEETING CONDUCT PROCESS

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1. INTRODUCTION

This process describes an approach to managing meetings for the Beacon HR/Payroll Implementation Project and applies to all types of meetings.

The key item is to identify the purpose for holding the meeting and communicate it to all invitees. For example, the purpose of the weekly staff meeting is to:

- Review activities from the previous staff meeting and to check on the status of open action items
- Identify and assign new actions
- Resolve any outstanding issues.

Be sure to include the appropriate attendees for each meeting. For example, project stakeholders will most likely need to attend any Senior Management Review meetings.

2. DESCRIPTION

Each meeting will have a set agenda listing topics of discussion and targeted times for each topic/item. Ideally, the agenda should be prioritized and sent out to all attendees a minimum of three days prior to the meeting to allow the participants adequate time to prepare. For standing meetings such as weekly team lead meetings, a standardized agenda can be used, but should be briefly reviewed for any modifications/revisions at the beginning of each meeting. See template in the Templates directory on the T Drive for details.

3. TYPES OF MEETINGS

3.1. Meeting Formats

It is also important to realize that there are different meeting formats (e.g. face to face meetings, virtual meetings, video conferencing). Some questions to ask when determining the format of the meeting include:

- What is the significance of the objective of the meeting? Typically, the more significant, the more important it is to meet face to face
- What is the proximity of the participants? If the participants need to travel long distances, it may save time and money to use video conferencing or conference calls
- What is the time frame for responses? If it is immediate, then the availability of meeting facilities and people may dictate the type of meeting.

Keep in mind that the process for conducting the meeting is the same, regardless of the format used.

3.2. Meeting Types

There are several types of meetings. They include:

- Strategic planning meetings – occur over time and focus on redirection

- Information sharing - provide participants new information that will affect them
- Brainstorming – loosely structured to generate different ideas
- Training meetings – save time and money by instructing several team members at the same time
- Progress meetings – track progress of a task, implemented change or solution.

4. BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES

There are behavioral guidelines for participating in the meeting. At a minimum, the following standard code of conduct could be used for all meetings:

- Prepare for the meeting, especially for assigned action items/topics
- Start and finish the meeting on time
- One person speaks at a time
- Employ active listening skills
- Stay on topic/avoid tangents in the discussions
- Use the "three-knock rule" for extended discussions. Everyone in the meeting has the responsibility to knock three times on the table if the discussion gets off-topic or someone belabors a point too long
- If you cannot make a meeting or will be unavoidably late, inform someone who will be attending the meeting so that the meeting will not be delayed for those who are on time and in attendance
- If you miss a meeting or are late, you are responsible for finding out what was discussed before the next meeting, either by talking to someone who was at the meeting or by reviewing meeting minutes, notes, or action items.

5. EXPECTATIONS

Identify and clarify the expectations for what is to be discussed and accomplished during the meeting. Briefly review these expectations at the end of the meeting as a means of measuring how successful the meeting was in achieving its purpose and how well it was conducted.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Identify and assign the roles and responsibilities for people at the beginning of each meeting. In some cases, these roles and responsibilities can be combined, depending on the size and nature of the meeting. At a minimum, these should consist of:

- A meeting Facilitator/Leader who calls the meeting and invites attendees, sets the agenda and runs the meeting. The leader should guide the flow of discussion but not dictate the outcome of the meeting. The leader may participate in the meeting but should also be sure to bring the meeting back on target if it goes off subject. The leader is responsible for resolving conflict when necessary (see section below)
- A Timekeeper to monitor the time for each topic and keep the pace of the meeting in-line with the agenda
- A Recorder to identify attendees, take minutes and capture actions items.

7. RESOLVING CONFLICT

During a meeting, three main causes of conflict may arise. These include:

- Opposing viewpoints
- Differing values
- Conflicting goals

Several ways for the Leader to resolve conflict is to emphasize common goals, strive for understanding, focus on rational ideas, encourage creation of alternative solutions, and/or delay addressing the issue.

8. DECISION MAKING

A systematic approach for making decisions is necessary to keep participants on track, focused and productive. Five main steps to be completed when making decisions include:

- Analyze the situation - Determine the cause and effects, and set an objective
- Generate options - Establish criteria in order to select good options. This may be done by listing the perfect solution and then list the conditions that would surround such a plan
- Select the best option - Determine if the option is applicable, practical, and has risks. Once that is completed, weigh the pros and cons and use a decision matrix, if necessary
- Implement the option - Determine the deliverable that will implement the option, assign the task, create a timeline
- Assess the effectiveness of the option - Could be assessed in quality management reviews, peer reviews or other predetermined project reviews.

9. MEETING CLOSURE

Prior to dismissal of the meeting, the leader should review the action item list and ensure that attendees understand the items and their particular role regarding that action item including due dates, follow-up, etc.